

LIII.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed “to the Editors of ‘The Ibis’”:

SIRS,—In your note (*Ibis*, July 1899, p. 480) on my sketch of the fauna and flora of the Altai Mountains, read before the Linnean Society in December last, you have evidently failed to grasp the geographical features of the country which I visited last year with Mr. Fletcher. You speak of the Western Altai, which I never visited, though it is quite true that Dr. Finsch, in his ‘*Reise nach West-Sibirien*’ (Berlin, 1879), did pass through a part of the Western Altai. He does not seem to have spent more than 10–15 days in the Altai Mountains or to have collected birds to any great extent during his rapid journey through the Irtysh and Buchtarma valleys. Neither did he, so far as I can make out, ever cross to the headwaters of the Obb, as you say, or come within 100 miles or more of my route in the mountains. Therefore, when I said that no ornithologist had worked out the birds of the Altai, I think I was correct, and I am sure that any ornithologist who will visit the South-eastern Altai, by which I mean the valleys of the Tchuja, Bashkaus, and Tchulishman rivers—all tributaries of the Obb—he will find a rich harvest of birds, though I venture to think I have not left many new butterflies to be discovered.

It is a fact to be remarked that, judging from the collections of Lepidoptera made by Kindermann in 1851 and 1853, and by Ruckbeil more recently in the Upper Irtysh and Buchtarma valleys, the fauna of that part of the Altai (the South-western) is of a much more European character than in the district where I collected; and, as far as I am at present able to judge, the fauna of the Alatau and Tarbagatai mountains, where Dr. Finsch collected, has more affinity to that of Turkestan than to that of the Eastern Altai and Sayansk mountains, which appear to belong to the same zoological subregion as Eastern Siberia.

Yours &c.,

H. J. ELWES.

Colesborne, Aug. 9.

SIRS,—The reference on p. 457 of the July number of ‘The Ibis’ to Dr. Girtanner’s paper on the Bearded Vulture (*Gypætus barbatus*) has induced me to record having seen one of these birds near Finhaut, in Canton Valais, Switzerland, on 13th October, 1898.

Snow had fallen in the preceding night, and the mountains were white above 5000 feet. As I climbed through the woods, at about that height, one of these grand birds came towards me, sailing over the tree-tops, and passed directly above my head, quite near me. Round and round it wheeled, in great circles, sometimes disappearing behind the trees, then coming over me again, rising higher and higher, until it passed over the top of Bel-Oiseau mountain. Being unarmed, I had to be content with having “seen” the bird, although within shooting-distance when it first passed me.

Yours &c.,

PERCY E. FREKE.

7 Limes Road, Folkestone,  
August 4th, 1899.

SIRS,—To the notes of Mr. C. W. Andrews on remains of *Pelecanus crispus* from the lake-dwellings of Glastonbury, you have appended a footnote (*anteà*, p. 352) stating that, “according to Mr. A. C. Chapman, the Pelican is still to be found wild in West Jutland.” Danish naturalists cannot allow such a statement to pass, and already we have protested (‘Ibis,’ 1895, p. 294; Vidensk. Medd. Naturhist. Foren. Kjöbenhavn, 1895, p. 60). One or the other species of Pelican (the species alluded to by Mr. Chapman was *P. onocrotalus*) may perhaps be seen in Denmark as the rarest of stragglers; we have no indisputable evidence of it; but that “the Pelican” is *not* “still to be found wild” is beyond all doubt.

Yours &c.,

HERLUF WINGE.

Universitets Zoologiske Museum,  
Kjöbenhavn, August 8th, 1899.

*The Bird-Collections of the British Museum.*—From the Report on the British Museum for the year ending March